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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 000141

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AMEMBASSY BERLIN PASS TO AMCONSUL LEIPZIG
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI PASS TO AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG

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SUBJECT: Greek Intelligence Dir. Bikas on Proposed Reorganization

REF: Athens045; Athens059; Athens057; 09Athens1643

CLASSIFIED BY: Daniel V. Speckhard, Ambassador, State, EXEC; REASON:
1.4(B), (C), (D)

¶1. (C/NF) SUMMARY: During a one-hour meeting on February 8, EYP Director General Bikas told Ambassador Speckhard that he accepted the ambassador's proposal for regular dialogue between the embassy and the leadership of EYP and the HNP on counterterrorism. Bikas commented briefly on the challenges that he faces in transforming EYP to make it more relevant and productive, particularly in how it allocates resources to analysis and technical collection. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C/NF) On February 8, 2010, the ambassador met for an hour with the director general of the Greek National Intelligence Service (EUP), Ambassador Konstantinos Bikas, in the latter's office at the headquarters of the Ministry of Citizen Protection (MCP). This was the final in a series of four meetings by the ambassador to hear from senior Greek officials about the ongoing reorganization of Greece's security, intelligence, and law enforcement agencies under the umbrella of the MCP, which was formed in October 2009. The ambassador's meeting with the commandant of the Hellenic Coast Guard (HCG) on January 20 was reported in Ref A. His meeting with Hellenic National Police (HNP) chief Eleftherios Oikonomou on January 21 was reported in Ref B. His meeting on January 22 with Minister of Citizen Protection Michalis Chrysochoidis was reported in Ref C. This was not the ambassador's first meeting with Bikas, who had attended the ambassador's introductory call on Chrysochoidis on November 12, 2009 (Ref D). However, this was his first private extended conversation with Bikas, who was appointed in October 2009. The ambassador was accompanied by the RAS chief, while Bikas was unaccompanied.

¶3. (C/NF) Bikas greeted the ambassador warmly and ushered him into his office. After an exchange of pleasantries, ambassador queried Bikas on how he was faring in reorganizing EYP, adding that on January 22 he had seen Chrysochoidis, who had been harshly critical of EYP and had announced that it would be thoroughly restructured. The ambassador pointed out that Chrysochoidis had urged him to meet with Bikas to learn of the plans for himself.

¶4. (C/NF) Bikas acknowledged that Chrysochoidis had briefed him on his meeting with the ambassador. He said that Chrysochoidis accepted the ambassador's proposal for a local counterterrorist working group involving EYP, HNP, and the embassy. He promised to speak with Police Chief Oikonomou in the near future and then to

contact the embassy to arrange a meeting for them with the RAS chief and the Legatt. Bikas commented that he enjoyed very good chemistry with Oikonomou. They recently made trips to Rome and Paris together as part of a determined effort to foster HNP-EYP interagency cooperation.

15. (C/NF) Bikas said that his main goal was to increase EYP's productivity and relevance, but that this was a tall order in a heavily unionized agency, especially one in which most employees belonged to PASOK. He had identified units that should be abolished however, it was proving difficult to find positions elsewhere in the government for the staff. He was critical of the large number of military officers serving in EYP for tours of five years and more. It was understandable that it was attractive for them to work in EYP, since their pay was much higher and their benefits greater while on detail. However, they often did not bring any needed intelligence skills. Bikas said that he wanted to bring military officers to EYP selectively for three-year tours. He also criticized EYP's analytical department, saying that years ago EYP had made the decision to adopt the model of CIA and the British SIS in terms of analytical resources. While that model might be appropriate for intelligence services working for policymakers with global concerns, it was inappropriate for senior Greek decision makers, whose diplomatic and security questions focused on a handful of key regional issues. As a result, EYP needed to draw back its thinly spread analytical resources, which were not producing analysis of any use to already well-informed

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policymakers, and concentrate them on key areas in which they could bring something new in the way of information and perspectives. Bikas added that he also was carefully reviewing all of EYP's technical collection programs and capabilities.

14. (C/NF) The ambassador asked if Bikas was preparing a draft law on reorganizing EYP, as Chrysochoidis had indicated. Bikas said that draft legislation was not yet in the works, since he was still studying his agency. He remarked that on February 9 he and Chrysochoidis were scheduled to speak at the parliament on EYP, with special focus on the Vodafone scandal. (Comment: This was a reference to a phone-tapping scandal that embroiled EYP and the former Ministry of Public Order in the aftermath of the 2004 Summer Olympic Games.) To prepare, he was studying statistics on EYP's size, budget, technical resources, etc. In other words, he was still learning about EYP and so was not ready yet to advocate publicly formal changes.

15. (C/NF) Bikas briefly sketched out EYP's efforts against terrorism. On the one hand, it was trying to become the lead agency in Greece for driving operations against domestic terrorism, both from the right and from the left. On the other hand, it was continuing to deploy resources against the growing threat of transnational terrorists using Greece as a base or a transit point. Bikas said that here too EYP was in the middle of programmatic restructuring to increase interagency cooperation and to eliminate previous ineffective approaches. He added that one of the reasons that he and Oikonomou had visited France and Italy was to learn how the internal security services were dealing with both problems. Bikas highlighted the way in which the French had developed both operational and intellectual approaches to domestic unrest, for example using temporary barriers to channel demonstrators away from potential flashpoints, thus allowing them to have their public say but also keeping the lid of outbreaks of violence. Bikas touched briefly on the need for reforms in Greece's anti-terrorist laws, noting instances in which courts had thwarted counterterrorist efforts by freeing detained suspects (e.g., accepting defense argument that fingerprints on movable items in anarchists' safehouses were not admissible as evidence of participation in the group's activities).

16. (C/NF) The meeting ended with the ambassador's expression of the U.S. side's readiness to assist EYP and the HNP in their counterterrorist efforts and of his appreciation that both Bikas and Oikonomou had accepted his proposal for increased communications between the embassy and the leadership of the MCP's key anti-crime and counterterrorist agencies.

17. (C/NF) COMMENT: While the new Director General came off as smooth, intellectual and engaging, unlike the Minister of Citizen Protection he did not project a sense of urgency or a "strong command" approach to his mission. Although the GoG has instituted some new initiatives, such as the new emphasis on counterterrorism, the sense we had was that those were under the direction of the new Minister, and the Director General was still learning the ropes in his relatively quiet office.

SPECKHARD